
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2020MAH0055-000896
May 16, 2020

Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

New supportive homes offer hope for people in Prince Rupert

PRINCE RUPERT – The Government of B.C., the City of Prince Rupert and North Coast Transition Society (NCTS) have partnered to purchase a building that will provide new, permanent, supportive housing for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness.

“Homelessness affects not only those experiencing it, but also the community as a whole,” said Jennifer Rice, MLA for North Coast. “We’re excited to work with our partners to convert this building into new supportive homes for people in Prince Rupert. These homes with supports will help people experiencing homelessness to regroup and recover, and the benefits will extend into the community.”

The Province, through BC Housing, has purchased the former Raffles Inn motel at 1080 3rd Ave. and will convert it into a permanent supportive housing building with up to 48 units, each with private washrooms, showers and mini kitchens. The building will include a commercial kitchen, dining and lounge areas, storage and amenity space, laundry and a medical examination room.

Once complete, this building will have the capacity for a 35-space temporary shelter or an extreme weather response shelter.

“These new units of supportive housing will offer 24/7 support to our community's most vulnerable, including achieving economies of scale by integrating a temporary shelter as well,” said Lee Brain, mayor, Prince Rupert. “When the first supportive units opened at Crow’s Nest, they were immediately full, proving that the need exceeded the supply of available units. We are happy to be working with the Province to make this happen in Prince Rupert.”

NCTS will operate the supportive housing building and will provide residents with 24/7 on-site staff and support services, including meal programs, life and employment skills training, health and wellness support services and opportunities for volunteer work.

“We are very excited about this opportunity and much needed project that serve the needs of the most marginalized members of our community,” said Christine White, executive director, NCTS. “The people of Prince Rupert have been so generous and supportive of those living on the streets. We know that this will benefit the community as having a home and a safe place is a start for life-changing opportunities. BC Housing and MLA Jennifer Rice have been a huge support in this project, in addition to all our other community partners. We look forward to moving on with the project.”

NCTS operates a 35-space temporary shelter at Fisherman’s Hall at 869 Fraser St. Once renovations at 1080 3rd Ave. are complete, all guests from the shelter will be transitioned to the new supportive housing.

Construction will begin in fall 2020. The shelter portion of the building is expected to open in early 2021, with the supportive homes ready by fall 2021.

Quick Facts:

- The Province will provide \$11.8 million to the project through the Supportive Housing Fund, as well as an annual operating subsidy of \$1.2 million.
- The Province worked with its partners to open the Crow’s Nest, a 36-unit modular supportive building for people experiencing homelessness in Prince Rupert in March 2019.
- In response to COVID-19, more than 2,400 spaces in hotels, motels and community centres throughout B.C. have been secured for vulnerable people to reside. In Prince Rupert, BC Housing has identified one site with 35 spaces as temporary accommodation for vulnerable people in the community.

Learn More:

For more information on how BC Housing is supporting British Columbians during the COVID-19 outbreak, visit: <https://www.bchousing.org/COVID-19/>

A map showing the location of all announced provincially funded housing projects in B.C. is available online: <https://www.bchousing.org/homes-for-BC>

To learn about the steps the Province is taking to tackle the housing crisis and deliver affordable homes for British Columbians, visit: <https://workingforyou.gov.bc.ca/>

Two backgrounders follow.

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BACKGROUND 1

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Services, supports provided for modular housing

All new modular housing buildings in the province have around-the-clock staffing to help young people, people with disabilities, seniors and others in critical need of housing.

The Province is providing annual operating funding to help those with the highest housing needs to build new beginnings. Experienced staff provide support to tenants based on their assessed needs.

Services and supports provided to young people, seniors, people with disabilities and others who are experiencing or at risk of homelessness, include:

- on-site supports and connection to additional specialized supports in their community;
- supports that are tailored to the needs of the residents, including education and employment opportunities, and health and wellness services, including mental health and addiction treatment programs;
- individual or group support services, such as life skills, community information and social and recreational programs;
- meals;
- case planning and needs assessment;
- other supports designed to assist residents in meeting their personal and housing goals, including culturally specific programs;
- help accessing income assistance, pension benefits, disability benefits, obtaining a B.C. identification card or establishing a bank account;
- support for residents to learn how to operate and maintain a home; and
- free laundry services, either on or off site.

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BACKGROUND 2

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Province building new homes to meet full spectrum of housing needs

The B.C. government is working in partnership with non-profits, municipalities, First Nations, Indigenous housing organizations and the private sector to build 114,000 affordable homes that cover the full spectrum of housing needs for British Columbians by 2028.

Budget 2018 included a \$7-billion investment in the homes people need. As a result of that investment, more than 23,000 new homes are completed, under construction or in the approvals process for a range of people who are struggling to find a place to live, from people who are experiencing homelessness and seniors on fixed incomes, to middle-income families, students and individuals. As of Dec. 31, 2019, this includes:

Housing for people with middle incomes

The average annual household income qualifying for homes underway is under \$99,000 per year – 2,802 homes:

- HousingHub: 2,802 homes

Housing for people with low to moderate incomes

This includes people residing in social housing (household incomes less than \$65,000) as well as those living in affordable market rentals (households with annual incomes up to \$74,000) – 9,837 homes:

Affordable market:

- Building BC: Community Housing Fund (30% of units in each project): 1,565 rental homes for people with low to moderate incomes
- Affordable Rental Housing Program: 1,615 homes for people with low to moderate incomes
- Deepening Affordability Fund: 1,976 homes for people with low to moderate incomes
- Regional Housing First Program: 907 homes for people with low to moderate incomes

Social housing or subsidized rents:

- Building BC: Community Housing Fund (50% of units in each project): 2,609 rental homes for people with low incomes
- Building BC: Indigenous Housing Fund: 1,165 homes for Indigenous peoples, on- and off-reserve

Housing for people with very low incomes

Rental housing for people experiencing or at-risk of homelessness, or for people with very low incomes (includes supportive housing and shelter-rate housing) – 4,795 homes:

- Rapid Response to Homelessness: 2,012 homes with 24/7 support
- Building BC: Supportive Housing Fund: 1,060 homes with 24/7 support
- Building BC: Women’s Transition Housing Fund: 679 spaces of transition, second-stage and affordable rental housing for women and children leaving violence
- Building BC: Community Housing Fund (20% of units in each project): 1,044 homes

Housing for students – 5,584 homes:

- BC Student Housing Loan Program: 2,699 on-campus student housing units are under construction, in development or in the approvals process
- 2,885 student housing units are also completed, under construction or in development through partnerships with post-secondary institutions

Total: 23,018 homes

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